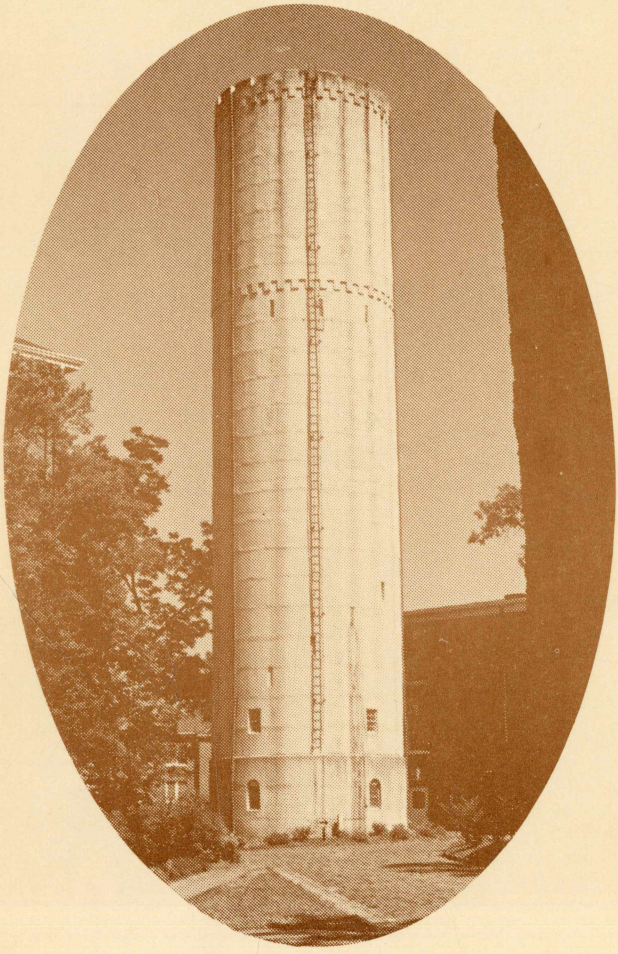

TOWER

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TOWER

in dedication to Dr. Milton Foley

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"For what is the poet if not a bringer of gifts to the reader."
Sharon Doubiago

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Cover photograph by Andy Russell.

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LORI McINTYRE

A.E. HOUSMAN SAID IT

She was only 17
when he first touched her,
and the fog still lingers
without him.

Lost in a fog,
or the sea, or the dark.
Always accidentally touching elbows.
Twenty-one really is a magic age.

CAT

Tiny creature, delicate,
leaf-like she is;
Eyes like emeralds.
Small mouth drawn up
in a grim line.

Tormented, she lies down
to die her death.
Her friend deserts her
like a traitor.
She is alone.

Her kittens are born
and die.
Her man is gone,
a provider.
And she dies palely.

OLDER BROTHER

Once, I stole your fire engine
in the process of play.
But being older than me
you decided to step back.

That was a while ago, years;
now you are still my older brother,
but circumstances have not been reckoned with
since I have drifted on this empty sea.

Can we be friends again, you and me;
It is not easy being older than a child,
and I remember how it was
when you were 10 and I was 5.

MARY ANDERSON

LAMENT OF A RUBENS WOMAN

Her flesh inspires no longer poets' praise
With mounds and folds of softness for her sin.
As unabashed she dances out her days,
She's asked no man's permission to begin.
Her eyes no more incite man to desire
When passion precedes likability.
Instead they spark a different kind of fire --
That of defense and insecurity.
So if her acid tongue distresses thee,
If awesome stature thee intimidates,
If stronger will thine eyes have yet to see
Though thin and docile girls the world dictates,
Look for thy strength in weaker, smaller hands
If that is how one proves he is a man.

BLOOD

Donne's flea in hunger
  gave his poet
  alibies for loving.
The piggish mite made
  loved and lover
  synonyms for him
As perfect plasma
  swelled the insect's void
  and bard's desire.

I have not the flea,
  but its starvation;
  to drink from you forever,
Even that which is
  undesirable
  and unallowed,
Until my thirst is sate,
  would not suffice.
  Thirst would come again.

But I need no excuse
  or clever argument
  to take your love.
You gave me your permission
  and welcomed me
  to drink and feast.
Donne's coy inquiry
  I will attempt
  to answer now:

The flowing of our
  bloods together
  makes us one.

JOHN MORGAN

Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust . . .

Isaiah 5:24

UP AS DUST

Heaven
delivered such beauty
to bud under fall's cool rain
drops, mend wounds in special balms,
fill appetites over Eden's tables, fly
through children's dreams: But hands
of time shaking for dreams
choked
innocence
over long
narrow
tables
with special
bombs dropped
from clouds
to sprout
under the
bottom of hell

DEANNA ROHLING

ON THE SHORE

This world is too much for me.
I am drowning in death.
Each day the murky water rises;
Each day another last, long-drawn-out breath.

When I was born, high on the soft sand shore,
My mother's feet in shallow water already stood.
Now the tide rushes in as at Mont-St-Michel,
And already its icy fingers grip my neck.
One more wave could wash me down.
But why despair?

I'll turn my face to shore,
  knowing that God is both on land and sea,
And watch the low waves coursing in, and know.
Yet never see death rolling in behind me.

JURIKA OKA

IN THE SHOWER ROOM

Ascending vapor
A dreamy scent
Faintly
Something like a fruit
Or a flower

I write some letters
On a misted glass

Who said such a thing
"I am lonely."

No answer
And then, long-long
Shhhhhhhhhhh

d-d-crown

d
dew
drrrr
a drop
dripped
fell in drops
made a milk-crown
everything has stopped
in the kitten's round eyes

THE LAKE

Leaden Mauve
Clear, creaking fine line
Small stars, hashed
Hoarse honk-honk
Little by little
Lose the sight
Dimly
The advent of violet-grey
And silence

THE LAST AUBURN WIND

A squirrel is gnawing time
Something
Runs past
Toward the between season
Grazing a tuft of his brush
Swinging Mountain ash
Reddishly

Winter is coming
Also in Tokyo

Time does not stop
The communication has cut off
Only that Something
Has been affirming
The existence of the lapse
Somehow, far away

MENCHERRO BATTS

When She Thought . . . .

when she thought about herself and how
she could say, all too easily, i love you
she remembered how she looked naked

when she looked at her clock at 12 a.m.
she remembered she had not seen you all day
except in passing

unfortunately, when her mind wandered too
far back, she remembered you saying, all too easily,
you are the air i breathe

there are some things that we will
always know about ourselves
and not like
and there are some things that we
know we cannot live without

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MARTHA McCLENDON

AFFAIR

I served you a scarlet letter with your
quick-scrambled eggs this morning
After the hasty shower of our guilt-carmined skins ended drying.
I kissed you without looking
into your sleepy-puffy eyes
and started at your coffee, cooling,
as you rushed to your wrecked bonds and lies.

Casseiopeia rains her lights

Midnight suns, fair cousins of diamonds,

The eyes of space

Wink everlastingly down the corridors of time.

I stand in pristine darkness

Leaves rustle in imitation of music,

Then,

Only the wind speaks, in dumb words

Sound in Silence.

MAX CASSIDY

A CHANGING DEFINITION

Some time ago, my English professor assigned an essay in which the objective was to tell how, as individuals, our interpretation or definition of a certain term had changed. For several days afterward, I brooded listlessly upon the subject in question, unable to decide upon any definite word I thought worthy enough to serve as a basis for my paper. During this period of indecisiveness I debated with several adjectives, many that I considered my own positive and negative attributes. In a moment of insight, however, I concluded immediately upon an expression that applies to all people - WAR.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines war as: The state or fact of exerting violence or force against another, not only against a state or other politically organized body.War, to me, cannot be defined in such blunt and constant terms. I can first remember being aware of the term war at the age of six. Since that time, it has remained in a form that is unstable and frightening:

War, at the age of six, meant crying all night long in my parent's arms over the sudden realization that people were being killed in Vietnam; and that I too would one day face death.

War, at the age of seven, was my mother, reassuring me with a lie that I would never encounter war because of my allergies.

War, at the age of eight, was being told that my uncle, a disabled veteran, had beat his wife again because of joblessness and frustration.

War, at the age of nine, was a reoccuring nightmare of buildings being bombed while I ran hysterically through deserted streets.

War, at the age of ten, was seeing my cousin, ten years my senior, become a social outcast after declaring himself a conscientious objecter.

War, at the age of eleven, was studying Hiroshima, learning the effects of radiation, and then wishing my father had built a bomb shelter.

War, at the age of twelve, was the ridiculous pamphlets that our school system passed out, instructing students what to do in case of nuclear attack.

War, at the age of thirteen, was seeing photos of naked, crying children, terrified at the sight of their dead, napalmed mother.

War, at the age of fourteen, was learning that Vietnam had been a teenage war (average age: 19).

War, at the age of fifteen, was fearing for the future of my unborn children, when I was but a child myself.

War, at the age of sixteen, was the sleepless nights spent alone, questioning the need for initiative or hope when nuclear war is inevitable in my lifetime.

War, at the age of seventeen, was seeing a massive electrical blackout, then fearing for a few timeless moments that the end of time had surely come.

War, at the age of eighteen, was signing up for the draft.

War, is hell . . .

There is no conclusion.

CELESTE LOGAN NUNNALY

HANDS

Shake, old wrinkled hands, shake!
Tremble like two leaves in a winter's storm!
You, Hands, who were slapped as a child and kissed as a lady.
You, who knew the scrub brush and muddy water.
You, who would smooth in pleasure by the fire-can.
You, old Hands, who have known both pain and love --
SHAKE!!
As if you have not felt heaven and hell --
Or void.

MARIA LECHTREK

reaching down, I seize
a handful
of sand -
only to let it
seep
slowly
through my fingers
leaving me nothing.

reaching down, I
whet my fingers
in the warmth of the ocean's tide -
only to let the water
recede
slowly
through my fingers
leaving me nothing.

reaching up,
I touch the breeze
that lightly dances
around my fingers
as by a solemn piper's tune -
only to let it
pass on
slowly
through my fingers
leaving me

reaching.

GLENN SMITH

THE LAST

Shifting ocean waters wrenched his course.
Bowing his unbroken speed he cut the foam.
A tremendous slap, then a disappearing tail.

Somewhere mislaid the behemoth remembered,
A full-blown blast of ocean orchestration.
Evenings when the vibrant echoes rang clear,
And the sea floor shook with power.

Lost - for an emptiness larger than his own,
Swallowed him into solitude.
A living ship, set to sail,
Never to spout his welcome again.

THE MEETING

Light ventured a rythmic dance,
Through the outward swirl of suspended leaves.
I held the wind's pattern for a breath's time
Catching the brilliant sweep unaware.

The instant paused for several minutes
As I stared across a gentle pasture
At a single white birch among a shrouded dark wood.

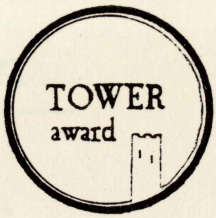
The reality and the memory shook hands,
And spoke to me of generations,
Bouncing light among themselves
Wary, then comfortable as they look beyond their age,
To a solitary white hope among a mysterious future.

LISA NOE STEWART

ALPHABET TEARS

Bet you'd be surprised
even worse, delighted
a magician whose trick worked
for the very first time
if you knew that I really do cry
that my tears
aren't cold and crystalline formations
that slide from
a cavern filled with
stalactites of black ice
onyx and hideously beautiful
They spill instead from red rimmed bowls
hot and salty
like alphabet soup
full of letters that make messy puddles on my face
sad and jumbled remnants of all the words
I should have said
Like a child held prisoner
by a mother's eye and a half-eaten dinner
I try to eat my soup and be done
but all the ocean's salt will not
change the taste
and my spoon keeps dipping
accurately, accusingly
and unnervingly
the letters
C-O-W-A-R-D
I lose my appetite
sigh
and lay aside the spoon

The poet
can never surpass
the poetess
the male
is more aware of his bulk
and will never completely trust
paper
to bear the weight of his soul



Shame
that she can't take a lesson
from Emma Bovary.
She's Emma all over again,
(though externals differ)
drives an old Chevy and wears stiletto heels
instead of running barefoot cross the French countryside
but their mission is common
borne of vociferous madness and vanity.
A romantic on the rampage
tirelessly sentimental
hopelessly hopeful
the spectre of unrequited love.
She hates her tears
because they can't cry like a violin.
Emotionally emanciated
because her sustenance is memory and fantasy,
savoring the sad boullion of her dreams
because a friend once told her that erotic dreams
are seduction on the astral plane.
Subconsciously honest,
her sleep-words are nocturnal admissions.

TAMARA EDWARDS

CLOSING THE SUMMER HOUSE

this woman
four years now has rented her soul
just as space to be used
for a man to inhabit
and he left it trashed
(you know how bachelors can live)
and he needed more room

there were those burning, itchy nights
summers before
when she tied back the curtains
opened wide windows
and lay not daring to touch
for fear his body would ignite
into heat lightning
waiting for a breeze
cool down, wildfire

and man and woman
painted walls white, so stark they were
naked except for the woman's watercolors
she made the mistake of believing
the walls of her soul were too pure
don't mar the snowy flawlessness
isn't it funny, white spreads an illusion
of space and the man felt only confinement

winters passed
bulky woolens thrown on and off
maybe the closets were too small
or the heat sputtered in the mornings
cold mornings
frost lingered, clung to the plants

anyway, she lived
for the man, her tenant
he moved on
her walls turned from stark to barren
whiter and purer
than a sanitarium
when she cries, feels
only echoes stirring through
the stillness of her rooms

dusty remnant of an abandoned house
board the windows, bar the doors
no one is home

LISA GRIFFIN

Bodily Harm, by Margaret Atwood, 266 p.,
New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982. $14.50

BODILY HARM

"This is how I got here, says Rennie."

This opening statement of Margaret Atwood's new novel, **Bodily Harm**, is an appropriate summary of what we find as we read on. The book reveals the story of Rennie Wilford, a freelance "lifestyles" journalist in Toronto, and the journey she makes into herself -- both physically and emotionally.

Besides **Bodily Harm**, Atwood, a Canadian author, has four other novels to her credit -- **The Edible Woman, Surfacing, Lady Oracle**, and **Life Before Man** -- as well as nine books of poetry. According to John Leonard, writing in **The New York Times Book Review**, Atwood's other works flow smoothly and fall pleasingly on the reader's eyes and ears. However, he says of her current work: "**Bodily Harm** is unpleasant. It chooses to be so . . . On this occasion, cells riot, and meat rots and history itself is diseased." His observation that **Bodily Harm** is unpleasant may sound strong -- yet it's true. The novel is full of unpleasant characters, unpleasant attitudes, unpleasant situations, and unpleasant language.

Rennie's past is very unpleasant. She has just experienced a number of physical and emotional shocks: she has just recovered from a partial mastectomy; her boyfriend, Jake, has moved out as a result of the uncomfortable atmosphere which ensues; and one afternoon she returns home to find that there has been an intruder in her apartment. A neighbor had called the police, who had frightened this "faceless stranger" away. Rennie wants desperately to put the incident from her mind, but she is unable to since he left a "reminder" for her: a coiled length of rope on her bed.

Rennie's present is also unpleasant. Escaping from the pressures of her life in Toronto, she takes a journalistic assignment to cover a possible vacation spot on the islands of St. Antoine and Ste. Agathe, which have just recently won their independence from Britain. While there she manages to get caught in the local political crosscurrents without being totally aware of it. Everyone she happens to get involved with is also directly entangled in the three-sided revolution and, like

Rennie, we are not always sure who, if anyone, is the "good buy," or even which side we are always on. St. Antoine becomes for Rennie, both a psychological and political learning experience. Rennie fights the experience, though, wanting to remain an impartial tourist -- invisible, exempt.

As Newton Koltz points out in **Commonweal,** "Exempt" is the key word in the book. It reappears over and over in the course of the story. The word is first used by Paul, an activist in the uprising who later becomes Rennie's lover. He uses the expression to reassure Rennie of her safe position in the revolution: "You're a tourist, you're exempt." At several points in the story, Rennie has need to remind herself of this statement, but her unwillingness to get involved helps her only to avoid the situation which eventually erupts, not to escape it. Toward the end of the novel, she begins to "understand for the first time that this is not necessarily a place she will get out of, ever. She is not exempt. Nobody is exempt from anything." Rennie finally sees that she is not exempt from the terrors involved in the political upheaval and that she is not exempt from the future either.

Earlier, Atwood gives us a glimpse of this first dawning of understanding: "People get trapped in things that are beyond their control, she ought to know that by now." Slowly Rennie does know. We are shown that she does at the end of the novel, when Atwood obligingly takes us into Rennie's thoughts: "She will never be rescued. She has already been rescued. She is not exempt." This paradoxical statement reveals Rennie's uncertainty of her particular role in the whole situation and shows that she has developed into a person who can see more than what the surface shows.

Along with the exempt idea, runs another theme -- that of the "faceless stranger" mentioned before. This form -- this figure without a face -- haunts Rennie throughout the entire story. In the opening scene, she sees her intruder as a faceless stranger, and this feeling of not knowing who he is has her terrified. As the novel progresses, he comes to stand for much more than a mere intruder -- he becomes a symbol for all she doesn't recognize or understand. Several times she feels she is on the verge of uncovering him, but each time he manages to elude her. Finally, she is shocked into a crude realization: ". . . there is no such thing as a faceless stranger, every face is someone's, it has a name." She has recognized the "faceless stranger" at last: he is . . .

Rennie steers clear of permanent relationships, "involvements," as she calls them. She makes the remark at the beginning of the book, to her surgeon, Daniel, "Massive involvement . . . It's never been my thing." On the surface she seems to be making a joke about her cancer, but she is actually referring to her relationships with men. Her remark entices us to find out if she can make this statement at the end of her experiences as easily as she does at the start of them. She can't. Instead, she has

developed into a person who is "stranded in the future . . . (and) doesn't know how to get back." The truth is, however, that she doesn't really want to go back to her old way of thinking. She is glad she has grown as both a woman and as an individual.

Atwood hints at the beginning of the novel that Rennie wants something "legitimate" to say in her articles, instead of writing what she thinks of as trivial matters. Before she can accomplish this goal, she must gain an insight into life, which she does: "What she sees has not altered: only the way she sees it. It's all exactly the same. Nothing is the same" -- another paradox. Once she understands and gains confidence in herself, she sees herself in a new light -- as one who **has** something legitimate to say: " . . . she is subversive. She was not once but now she is. A reporter. She will pick her time; then she will report." She is, of course, referring to her experiences in St. Antoine and the horrors she has witnessed. Thus, we are left believing in Rennie, and, in a sense, the value of Margaret Atwood's novel.

The story's only weakness can also be viewed as a strength -- the use of flashbacks. At the first of the novel they are very helpful, but as the story progresses they complicate the story, slowing events down unnecessarily.

On the other hand, the flashbacks prove very helpful as an insight into Rennie -- explaining her actions and her reactions. Atwood succeeds admirably in the placement of these flashbacks; they fit right into a present situation and aid in forming an overall impression of the event.

Another strength in the story is the author's handling of point of view. The beginning of the novel has Rennie as the narrator. This point of view quickly shifts to one of limited omniscience, thereby allowing us some knowledge of action beneath the surface. We are also able to view the other characters more objectively and thus see them as they really are.

The greatest strengh lies in the way in which Atwood uses dialogue. She very obviously has an ear for the art of conversation and gives us dialogue which is strong, believable, compelling, and revealing -- involving us totally.

Though **Bodily Harm** is "an unpleasant novel," it is unforgettable. It remains with us for a very long while after the last page is turned. It is a novel which makes us think -- realize -- and almost understand. We experience several emotions while reading it: fear, amusements, terror, confusion, and amazement. We are left with a truth: one which hits us fast and hard: a discovery that we are no different from Rennie and the others in the story -- **we** are not exempt any more than they are not exempt. "Nobody is exempt."

MARIA LECHTRECK

The Natural History of the Gorilla, by A.F. Dixson, 202 p., New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.

GENTLE GIANT OF THE FOREST

The early "scientific" literature about the gorilla is filled with bizarre stories about its behavior. Some of the richest of these were published in 1865 by the eminent anatomist Richard Owen. He reported that if an old male gorilla in a tree discerns an "elephant pulling down and wrenching off the branches . . . the gorilla, stealing along the bough, strikes the sensitive proboscis of the elephant with a violent blow" of a stout stick. In addition, he reported that the gorilla, when tired of harassing elephants, will turn his attention to hoisting natives into trees and strangling them.

The apes have always been popular as circus and zoo animals and as subjects of legends and folktales. In addition, the apes are more closely related to man than to any other living primates. But though we have made great progress in the scientific understanding of the gorilla, the largest of the anthropoids, we still know surprisingly little about this magnificent creature. For the gorilla was the last of the apes to be discovered by science. Luckily, what we do know has been synthesized into a well-written and well-organized treatise by A.F. Dixson: **The Natural History of the Gorilla.**

Dr. Alan F. Dixson, member of the Zoological Society of London, is the author of various articles on monkeys and apes published in the **Journal of Zoology** (London). Further, he took part in the final census of the mountain gorillas of the Virunga volcanoes, sponsored by the National Geographic Society and the Fauna Preservation Society, during which he had the privileged "opportunity to observe mountain gorillas in the wild."

In **The Natural History of the Gorilla**, Dixson contrasts the early studies done by researchers such as Richard Owen with what we now know about the gorilla. Dixson shows us that the gorilla is really a peaceful and gentle animal. For example, Dixson informs us that the male's main concern in the wild is the protection of the females and youths of his group. If the group is threatened by an intruder (and certainly the elephant is no foe) the male may make a ferocious display, and if matters are extreme he may even charge. But the charge is almost

always a bluff and the gorilla will usually turn and run. In addition, gorillas occasionally share their goods with other gorillas. Dixson tells us that one field investigator saw a young gorilla break off fruit-bearing branches and throw them down for the other group members. He also tells us about the observations of another investigator who watched a male gorilla work a laboratory apparatus in order to obtain some fruit which he gave to the female gorilla present. She later did the same for him.

Dixson also shows us how the gorilla species fits into the Primate order. The order Primates contains approximately 188 diverse species and includes the prosimians, monkeys, apes, and man. The apes, tailless, intelligent creatures that live in the tropical forests of Africa and Southeastern Asia, are further divided into two families. The "lesser" apes are the gibbon and siamang; the "great" apes are the chimpanzee, orangutan, and gorilla. Finally the gorilla species is broken down into three subspecies: the western lowland, the eastern lowland, and the endangered mountain subspecies of which less than three hundred individuals exist.

The single greatest asset of **The Natural History of the Gorilla** is its comprehensiveness. After beginning with a historical perspective on what we have learned about the gorilla, Dixson proceeds to discuss the classification of the gorilla relative to the other primates, the distribution of the gorilla throughout equatorial Africa, and the structural and functional aspects of the body of the gorilla. He then discusses the gorilla's evolutionary relationship to man, his sensory and intellectual capacities, his behavior and ecology, his reproduction, and his development as an infant. He devotes his final chapter to conservation. In addition to his text, Dixson provides a thorough eighteen-page bibliography with its references grouped by chapter.

His book also synthesizes both data and supporting theory, field observations and laboratory experiments. For example, Dixson discusses the successes of Congo, a young female mountain gorilla, in laboratory experiments. He then relates his findings to theory based on field observations:

> The reason why gorillas do not perform as well as chimpanzees or orangutans in problems involving tool use may be because ... gorillas are mainly terrestrial creatures feeding upon plants which are usually easily obtainable. This is not to ignore the fact that gorillas can climb trees remarkably well, that their ancestors were arboreal and that in the fathering of their food the hands are used a great deal and quite dexterously. Chimpanzees and orangutans, however, feed habitually in the

> trees and in order to reach fruit must emply a good deal of care and intelligence. They are heavy animals and many items of food are not easily reached.

Furthermore, Dixson's book is highly readable. The facts are presented in simple laymen's language and are often accompanied by a table or graph. (Of particular interest was the diagram comparing the relationship between the size of the pelvic inlet of various adult female primates with the size of the newborn's head.) About the only unsettling language the lay reader will come across is that of the scientific names of the creatures discussed. The book is also very easy to skim, especially since the contents of the chapters are divided and placed under large, bold subheadings.

In addition to tables and graphs, **The Natural History of the Gorilla** features photographs and drawings, the quality of which vary greatly. Some of the photographs, especially those depicting the lichen-covered trees of the gorilla's habitat and the one showing an adult male orangutan at a modern zoo, are much too vague to be of much descriptive use. In addition, several of the author's drawings, such as those comparing the pelvises and lower jaws of the gorilla with those of man, would be of much more interest if they had been drawn to scale. These poor illustrations constitute the weakest part of Dixson's book. On the other hand, some of the photographs and several of the drawings are highly instructive. Quite excellent were the author's drawings of the "copulatory postures of western lowland gorillas" and the "side views of anthropoid apes, reduced to same trunk length."

Still another asset of **The Natural History of the Gorilla** is that it provides extensive comparisons between the gorilla and the other apes and man. For example, Dixson cites an experiment comparing the behavior of four gorilla babies and two human babies based on Piaget's work on the developmental stages of children:

> In step six, infants were set the task of finding a toy after watching the experimenter place it under one of two cloths. The gorillas achieved this at an average age of twenty-four and a half weeks in contrast to thirty-two weeks in human infants. The most difficult step, in which the subjects had to locate a toy after it had been moved from place to place concealed inside a container, was accomplished at forty-three and a half weeks by gorillas but not until fifty-four weeks by humans.

Dixson shows us that the huge, powerful hairy ape with a massive face, protruding jaws, and a flattened nose that we know as the gorilla is more than just a combination of physical characteristics. He is a creature

that by day roams the forests, eats, and rests, and by night makes nests on the forest floor in which to sleep, infants and juveniles sharing the same nests as their mothers. He is a social animal that travels in groups but is usually shy and reserved. He is a patient and persistent being with a high intelligence. And he can smile in the same manner as we humans do.

Yet he may not have a future, for the constant encroachments by man into his home territory are threatening his very existence. The rain-forest habitats of this "gentle giant" are being quickly destroyed, and unless protective measures are taken, the mountain subspecies could become extinct within the next few years. It is thus quite appropriate that Dixson concludes his book with a plea for the conservation of one of the beings most like ourselves. Dixson's goal when writing **The Natural History of the Gorilla** was to "provide an up-to-date review of many aspects of the gorilla's biology . . . that is readable as well as informative." He has certainly succeeded at that. But more importantly, he has alerted us to the fact that we must not stand by as one of our closest zoological relatives vanishes from the planet.

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